SOME

Seasonable and Serious

QUERIES

Upon the late

Act against Conventicles.

Tending to discover

How much it is against the expres Word of GOD, the positive Law of the Nation, the Law & Light of Nature, and Principles of Prudence & Policy.

And therefore adjudged by the Law of the Land to be Void and Null. *Viz.*

Finch p.3. That no Act of Parliament, or Law repugnant to the Law of God, is of any force.

28 H.8. That no man of what estate, degree, or condition whatsoever, hath power to dispence with Gods Law.

Doct. & Stud. That against Scripture Law, Prescription, Statute, nor Custom may avail; and if any be brought in against it, they be void, and against Justice.

42 Ed.3. It is assented and accorded, That the Great Charter be holden and kept in all points, and that if any Statute be made to the contrary, it shall be held for none.

By a Friend to Truth and Peace. [Nicholas Lockyer M.A.]

Mat.24.48, 49. *And if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,* &c.

Acts 9.5. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

Psal.9.16. *The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands,* &c.

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Some Sober Queries upon the ACT against CONVENTICLES.

WHether upon a due and serious search, this late Law doth not appear to contradict the three Great Laws, *viz.* The Law of God, the Law of the Nation, and the Law of Nature; and is not contrary to the Rules of Prudence and Policy, and tending to promote some private and corrupt interest?

First, As to the Law of God:

I. Whether in the particulars following, relating to Preachers and Hearers, the Law of God is not manifestly contradicted and impugned?

1. Doth not Gods Law require all men that hear, learn, and keep it, having a Gift from Christ, of what Rank, Condition, or Quality soever, (high or low) should be Teachers and Publishers of it? *Mat.* 5.19. 1 *Pet.* 4.10. 2 *Tim.* 4.2. And accordingly have we not had, of high degree, preaching Kings, Princes, Judges, and *Levites*, *Psal.* 40.9. *Eccles.* 1.1. & 12.10. 2 *Chron.* 17.7,8,9. And of low degree, mechanick Carpenters, Herdsmen, Fishermen, Tentmakers, that have preached and published his Word and Law? *Mark* 6.3. *Amos* 1.1, *Mark* 1. 16, 17. *Acts* 18. 2.

And doth not this Law forbid any, high or low, to preach and publish Gods Law, but such as conform to the Traditions and Commands of men, *viz.* By Reading the Common-Prayer, Renouncing the Covenant, submitting to humane Services, Ceremonies, and Inventions, *Mark* 7. 7,8,9. however otherways fitted by Christ, with never such Ministerial Gifts and Attainments?

2. Doth not Gods Law say, *You may all prophesie* (or preach, 1 *Cor.* 14.1,2.) *one by one?* 1 Cor. 14.31.

And doth not this Law say, You shall not so prophesie, no not one?

3. Doth not Gods Law pronounce wo to his Preachers, if they preach not the Gospel? 1 *Cor.* 9. 16.

And doth not this Law pronounce wo to them, if they do?

4. Doth not Gods Law give promised Rewards and Blessings to

those that teach it to others? *Mat.*10.41. *&* 25.21. & 5.19. *Ja.*5.20.

And doth not this Law threaten a 20*l.* & 40*l.* Curse, yea, utter ruine to those that do?

5. Doth not Gods Law admit of preaching in Houses, Streets, and Fields, to great Multitudes, with promised mercies to the Owners so receiving his People and Preachers? *Acts* 20.20. & 28.31. *Luke* 13. 26. *Mat.*3.1. & 10.40,41,42.

And doth not this Law forbid such preaching, with threatned ruine to Owners and Hearers, as well as Preachers?

6. Doth not Gods Law denounce cursing and wrath to the uttermost to those that reject and forbid, and that mis-use and abuse his Preachers, and beat their fellow-servants? 1*Thes.*2.16. *Mat.*24.48,49,50.

And doth not this declare promised Blessings and Rewards to those that shall be most active in pursuing and persecuting the Preacher, and prosecuting and vexing the Hearers?

7. Doth not Gods Law enjoyn men frequently and stedfastly to assemble together, and to maintain and keep up their Fellowships and Meetings? *Heb.*10.25. & 3.13. *Acts* 2.42. *Mal.*3.14,16.

And doth not this Law not onely forbid, but tear and break up such Meetings and Assemblies, loading them with heavy Mulcts and Penalties *Tories Quoties*, as often as they so meet?

8. Doth not Gods Law admit of Popular Meetings, the assembling of great numbers to worship him, and attend his Ordinances, five thousand and eight thousand at a time? *Joh.*6.10. *Act.*4.4. & 2.41. yea, the more the better, without any limitation, or scandal of sedititon in so doing.

But doth not this Law limit those that must so worship and hear the Word, to four persons onely, beside the Family, unless they will be reputed seditious, and dealt with accordingly?

Q. II. Whether if it appears that indeed this New Law, and Word of Man, doth contradict the Old Law, and Word of God; the People of God ought any more to regard it now, than the three Children and *Daniel* did the Persian Law in like Case (*Dan.*3. 16,17. & 6.10.) in those days; or the Disciples (*Acts* 4.) did the Edicts, Threatnings, and Prohibitions of the Council then? And whether, if God be God, he ought not to be followed and obeyed rather than man, though Goods be spoyled, Liberties infringed, and Lives hazarded in so doing?

Q. III. Whether in case the Maxims of our English Laws in favour of the Word and Law of God, be of force, this Law is not to be deemed void and null? Which do assert for good Law, sound Doctrine, Reason,

ſon, and Truth, *That no Act of Parliament, or Law, repugnant to the Law of God, is of any force*, Finch, p. 3. *And that no man, of what Eſtate, Degree, or Condition whatſoever, hath power to diſpence with Gods Law, as all the Clergy of the Realm, and moſt of the Univerſities of Chriſtendom, and we alſo affirm, 28 H. 8. And that againſt Scripture Law, Preſcription, Statute, nor Cuſtom may avail; and if any be brought in againſt it, they be void, and againſt Juſtice.* Doct. & Stud.

Secondly, As to the Law of the Land.

I. Whether the ſaid Act is not expreſly contrary to the known, ancient, fundamental Laws of this Nation, eſpecially that of *Magna Charta*; which, as the great Bulwark of the Engliſh Liberty, has been confirmed by about forty Parliaments?

For doth not that Great Charter aſſure and confirm, That no Freeman ſhall be taken, or impriſoned, or diſſeiſed of his Free-hold, or Liberties, or free Cuſtoms, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any otherways deſtroyed, or paſſed upon, or condemned, but by the lawful Judgment of his Peers, or *Law of the Land: And that Juſtice ſhall neither be ſold, denied, or deferred?

* *Viz.* By due proceſs of the Common (or old) Law of *England*. See 2d part *Cook's Inſt. ch.* 29. *fo.* 50. ſo explained alſo by 37 *E.* 3. *ch.* 8.

And doth not this Act in contradiction thereto, both ſeiz upon mens Liberties and Eſtates, without any ſuch legal Proceſs or Judgement?

For is not the Juſtice impowered hereby, by force, Civil or Military, to ſeiz, take, and keep in cuſtody the peaceable free People of the Nation (†diſ-ſeizing them thereby of their Liberties) being Advocate, Jury, and Witneſs, and ſole Judge both of Law and Fact, as well as of the ability of the Offender? And is he not authorized alſo, according as he (in malice, favour, or affection) ſhall judge meet, to Convict, Sentence and Execute, by making Diſtreſs and Sale of Goods, how and upon whom he pleaſeth, without returning any thing again to the Owners, (which may be one hundred or two hundred pounds, for ten or twenty pounds) and therewith to reward the Informer, or who elſe he ſhall judge moſt active, be it his Clerk, Sonne, or Himſelf? (And is not this ſeizing * Free-hold too, with a witneſs?) And all without any legal Judgement and Proceſs? And is not the bribing the Informer (that principal Truſtee in the Act) or Juſtice himſelf, with ſo great a Reward, a ſetting Juſtice to ſale with a vengeance? And what can more violate that fundamental Law, both as to Perſon and Eſtate? Notwithſtanding by the 42 of *Ed.* 3. this Great Charter is commanded

† Six Remedies to relieve any that are ſo impriſoned or diſſeized of their free liberties, contrary to *Magna Charta*. 2d part *Cook's Inſt.* ch. 29. f. 55.

* Free-hold *is Goods and Chattels, as well as Lands & Tenements.* Cook's Inſtit. c. 29. p. 46.

to

to be kept in all points; and that whatever Law is made against it, is null and void: *Polton* 182. The words of the Statute are these:

At the Parliament of our Lord the King at Westminster, the first day of May, the 42 year of his Reign, It is assented and recorded, That the Great CHARTER, and the Charter of the Forrest be holden and kept in all Points; and if any STATUTE be made to the contrary, it shall be holden for none.

II. Whether it is not dangerous by the Laws and Customs of the Nation, for any to infringe and violate this Great Charter, under colour or pretence of any Law or Statute whatsoever? Witness that famous Example, and eminent Instance in 1 *H.*8. in the Impeachment and Execution of the two Justices of the Peace, *viz.* Sir *Richard Empson* Knight, and *Edmond Dudley* Esq; for their putting in execution the Statute made 11 *H.* 7. so contrary to *Magna Charta*, concerning which for better Information take my Lord *Cooks* own words in his *Instit L.*2.*C.*29. *f.*15. *Viz.*

"*Against this Antient and Fundamental Law, and in the face thereof,* "(having recited that Clause of *Magna Charta* before mentioned) *I find* "(saith he) *an Act of Parliament made, That as well Justices of Assize, as* "*Justices of Peace, (without any finding or Presentment by the Verdict of* "*twelve men) upon a bare Information for the King before them made,* "*should have full Power and Authority by their Discretions to hear and de-* "*termine all Offences and Contempts committed or done by any person or per-* "*sons against the Form, Ordinance and effect of any Statute made and not* "*repealed. By colour of which Act, shaking this Fundamental Law, it is* "*not credible what horrible Oppressions and Exactions, to the undoing of in-* "*finite numbers of people, were committed by Sir* Richard Empson *Knight,* "*and* Edmond Dudley *Esq; being Justices of the Peace throughout Eng-* "*land: And upon this Unjust and Injurious Act (as commonly in like Cases* "*it falleth out) a new Office was created, and they made Masters of the* "*Kings Forfeitures.*

"*But at a Parliament holden in the* 1 H. 8. *this Act of* 11 H. 7. *is recited,* "*and made void, and repealed; and the reason thereof is yeilded, For* "*that by force of the said Act, it was manifestly known that many sinister* "*and crafty feigned and forged Informations had been pursued against di-* "*vers of the Kings Subjects, to their great damage, and wrongful vexa-* "*tion. And the success hereof, and the fearful ends of these two Oppres-* "*sors, should deter others from committing the like; and should admonish* "*Parliaments, that instead of this ordinary and precious Tryal* per Legem "Terræ, *the known ancient Laws, they bring not in absolute and partial*

"*Tryals*

"Tryals by Diſcretion. The ſaid two Juſtices were to the joy of all People "executed the beginning of H. 8. Speed Chr. 983.

Not to mention the impeachment and dethroning the two Kings, *Edward* the ſecond, and *Richard* the ſecond, for having perverted the due courſe of Law, Juſtice and Right; and that they deſtroyed men by Informations, and without Legal Examination and Tryals; and that they had declared that the Laws of the Kingdom were in their own Breſts: As in their Articles of Impeachment does more at large appear.

Nor the Impeachment of the Lord Chief Juſtice *Tryſilian*, and his Brother Judges, *Fulthorp*, *Belknap*, *Carey*, *Holt*, *Burge*, and *Locton*, and others of the then Privy Council, and then *Lord Mayor of London*, who had ſet their hands to Judgements in ſubverting the Laws of the Land, and advancing the Kings Will and Commands above the known Laws of the Kingdom: For which the Lord Chief Juſtice and others of them were hanged at *Tyburn*. The Impeachment alſo of Judge *Thorp*, *Ed.* 3. and Cardinal *Woolſey*, H. 8. for adviſing the King to ſubvert the Laws. Not forgetting the late worthy Act of Chief Juſtice *Keeling*, in impriſoning and fining the *London*-Juſtices, for acting againſt the known Laws.

Qu. III.

Whether it doth not concern all perſons called to be active herein, whether Officers Civil, Military, or others, to be well adviſed what they do, leſt inſtead of promoting the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, (the great end of all wholſome Laws) they not onely infringe the juſt Liberties thereof, inſlave themſelves and Poſterities, but render themſelves liable to ſuch infamy, miſery and miſchief that the miſcreants beforementioned have done. And whether it will not be a good plea for any that may be vexed, perſecuted or proſecuted hereupon, why they conform not thereto, either by anſwering enſnaring queſtions to accuſe themſelves about Meetings, telling of Names, or places of abode, or payment of Moneys, that it is all againſt *Magna Charta* and the known Laws of the Land, which declare, that no man ſhall be put to anſwer without Preſentment, or matter of Record, or by due Proceſs, and Original Writ, according to Law; as by ſeveral Statutes, *viz.* 5. *Ed.* 3. 9. & 25 *Ed.* 3. 4. 28 *Ed.* 3. 3. 27 *Ed.* 3. 18. 42 *Ed.* 3. 33. *Petit. of Right*, 3 *Car.* 1. 1. 17 *Car.* 1. 14.

Qu. IV.

Whether the pretended *Salvo*, [*That you may, if you find your ſelf aggrieved hereby, make your Appeal, and take your Tryal by a Jury*] may

may acquit this Law from infringing and violating *Magna Charta*, and the known Laws of the Land: Because, first, is not the Law violated, by seizing and taking both Person and Estate without any such Process and Judgement? And secondly, that the Appeal must not lie in any other Court, but only before the Parties themselves complained of to do the wrong; who seem hereby to be made sole Judges in their own Cases; the Juries being to be empannelled by themselves, the Sheriffs being Parties with them; contrary to express Law, forbidding any to be Judge in his own Case. 8 *H. 6. fol.* 21. *El. Dier* 220. and Doctor *Bonham's* Case, 8 *part Cooks Reports.*

Thirdly, As to the Law of Nature.

I. Whether the said Law is not also contrary to the Law of Nature, *viz.* That Great *Magna Charta* laid down by our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 12. *Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even the same unto them: for this is the Law and the Prophets?*

For if the chiefest of the Persecutors, and who had the greatest hand in making this Act, were solemnly appealed to, Whether they, being men of Conscience, would think it equal either by Papists or Phanatiques, to be so dealt withal? *Viz.* In their solemn Worship to be so hated and disturbed by a Tumult and Rabble; to be tore and haled from their places and Assemblies, and imprisoned by Officers and armed men; to be pulled from their Ministers, and their Ministers from them, and so severely and ruinously fined from time to time for the same; and that nothing must satisfie but coming to Mass, or to be dipt and joyn'd to Anabaptistical Meetings, though against Conscience; and all this for no other Crime but peaceable Meeting and Worshipping God according to Conscience? Will any of them assert and give it under their hands, they judge all this but fair, just and equal dealing, and that they would be content to be dealt just so with, as they deal with others? Or further, If their Parish Churches were burnt by the Papists, and yet be fined, buffeted, and rendred seditious, and dealt with accordingly, for not coming at them, or meeting to worship in Houses or elsewhere in the interim; would it be judged fair and equal? Or not rather much at that rate as *Pharaoh* dealt with the *Israelites*, when he required them to make Brick without Straw, and beat them too if they brought not the full tale?

II. Whether

Qu. II.

Whether upon the ſame ground the Common-Prayer-Book-Worſhip is to be impoſed and ſubmitted to, to day, *viz.* becauſe a Law is got for it; the Maſs, upon the like Argument, is to be conformed to, to morrow; the Turkiſh Alcoran the next day, and the Jewiſh Talmud the next?

Qu. III.

Whether it is not unnatural for Proteſtants, pretending to own one Head, the Lord Jeſus; and one Law of his, the holy Scripture, which alſo is to interpret it ſelf; agreeing alſo in the Doctrinal part of their Religion, as by the Thirty Nine Articles appear; ſhould for Differences in the Ceremonial part, thus rent, tear, and devour each other; whilſt Turks, Papiſts, and other Religions, can live peaceably, and bear with each other under greater differences? And whether they that bite and devour each other, ſhould not take heed leſt they be devoured one of another, *Gal.* 5. 15. And that what meaſure they mete to others, the ſame be not meaſured to themſelves alſo? *Mat.* 7. 2.

Qu. IV.

Whether ſince by this Act Proteſtants onely are enjoyned, hired, and frighted thus to vex, diſturb, proſecute, and ruine one another, for worſhipping God in their way; and the Papiſts hereby in the mean time left to enjoy their Idolatrous Maſs in peace and quiet, without the leaſt diſturbance, and that as often as they pleaſe, and in as great numbers as they think good: Tends not too much to confirm the fears of many, that that curſed Intereſt (that ſo lately murder'd ſo many hundred thouſands in our Neighbour Countreys, and (as ſuppoſed) burnt the City) may be getting into the Saddle again, which they do & have ſo long gap'd for; and hereby not onely teach them afreſh to deal with Proteſtants, but to juſtifie all their bloody Cruelties of old, that upon the account of Conſcience they have exerciſed towards them? Therefore doth it not well become every conſiderate Proteſtant to ponder well what he is doing whilſt he is cutting down the Bough he ſtands on?

Qu. V.

Whether in point of Appeal, to make Parties themſelves Judges in their own Caſe, is a uſual thing? Or that the Law-makers themſelves uſe to practiſe it in their own Concerns? Or how well comporting with this Golden Rule aforeſaid, *To do to others as we would they ſhould do to us*?

Qu. VI.

Whether in all theſe reſpects, this Law ought not to be eſteemed

Null and Void; and altogether disregarded, as if there was no such thing in the Nation.

Fourthly, As to the Rules of Prudence and Policy.

Qu. I.

Whether it is not greatly imprudent to rise up against so considerable a part of the Nation as the Phanatique Interest certainly is; who for Sobriety, Counsel, and Conduct, have so great a Witness in the hearts of their greatest Enemies? And for the Trading part, whether Forreign or Domestick, (which the simple Commonwealths that flourish in the World judge so much the Interest and Honour of Prince and People) they have not so considerable a sway in every bodies eye, which if doubted (by the violent prosecution of the Act) too sudden (and it may be too dear-bought) Experience (notwithstanding Mr. *Parker's* Politicks) may evince? And for their quiet and peaceable demeanor, and that as well under great sufferings and provocations, as under probable † opportunities; not only to have given disturbance, but to have freed themselves from Persecution, may not ten years Experience give the undeniable demonstration? And will any wise State judge it according to the principles of Wisdom and Policy, by threatned ruine and destruction to irritate such a People, having heretofore also tasted the ill consequence of such like provocations? *Solomon* saith, *Oppression makes a wise man mad*; and the French have a Proverb, *Ne Reveille pas chat qui dort*; *Do not kindle the fire that was near quench'd.*

† *To wit, the Dutch Invasion, & Scottish Insurrection.*

Qu. II.

Whether the same Argument that is used against Popular great Meetings (and upon which the Act seems to be grounded, *viz.* That they tend to contrive Sedition and Rebellion) is not upon Principles of Reason and Experience found to be quite contrary? For what of Sedition and Rebellion is like to be contrived in a Publick Meeting, where the Doors are open, and all sorts of People come; and over which the Magistrate may have such Inspection, and whereof he must rationally have such speedy knowledge? And are there not Laws and Executioners of all sorts, both Civil and Military, sufficiently to punish and chastize the same, whenever made good against any? Whereas if great Meetings through Persecution be dispersed, then a Meeting of a thousand being driven into twenty or thirty parts, and constrained thereby to meet in private, what Opportunities may there be then, where no inspection can be had, to consult and plot?

Qu. III.

Qu. III.

Whether it is not against all Rules of Prudence and Policy, to exercise such severity upon our selves, that must necessarily wound and weaken, if not destroy the Trade of the Nation? Cannot the Bankers, Clothiers, Silk-men, Builders, Farmers, *&c.* tell you what a sad influence the rumour of this Act hath already had? What then will the Execution of it produce? It may be when you see the Shops shut up, the great Traders, and the ingenious Heads and Hands removed with their Stocks to your Neighbour Countreys, (proffering them already the liberty of their Consciences) the many thousand ruined Conformable Families (depending upon the Nonconformists) at your Doors for Bread, and confusion in your Streets, and a Foreigner (invited by your distractions) in your Gate, you may be better convinced, and find it may be, when it is too late, the direful Consequences of such evil Counsels and precipitate Actings?

Qu. IV.

Whether it doth not bespeak much imprudence to be making fresh attempts in fruitless Undertakings, that neither have had, nor rationally may have a tendency to accomplish promised ends? Phanatiques must be persecuted, vext, fined, rendred Sectaries, Seditious, Rebellious, and threatned with utter ruine; and wherefore? *Viz.* To discourage, weaken, divide, to deliver them from their Heresies, and reduce them to Canonical Obedience: But is this a rational way to effect it? No, by no means; for has not Experience (that Mistriss of Fools) taught us the quite contrary? For not to mention what happened in other Nations and former Generations; Let it but be remembred, Whether the Bishops cruel Courts, Impositions, Suspensions, the high Commissions, Pillories, Imprisonments, Finings, Banishments, *&c.* Backing the Common-Prayer with Armies; Convinced, weakned, divided, destroyed the Puritanical Faction, and rooted, confirmed, and advanced Episcopacy, and preserved the publick Peace and Safety in those days? And whether the several attempts the ten years last past, (no whit inferior to former times) have had, or are like to have any better success than theirs? Or not much like *Pharaoh's* of old, who the better to reduce his Phanatique Subjects from their gadding giddy humours about Worship, sets cruel Task-Masters over them, to humble and chastize them; But to what effect, the Text informs us, *Exod.* 1. 11. *That the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew.* And so may it not be said, That for one Phanatick ten years since, by the vertue of Persecution and Imposition, there is now ten, if not twenty,

in these Nations? The onely way to make an Interest considerable, is to persecute and oppress it. For what so riveted Protestantism, and rooted out Popery in these Nations, but such cruel Mediums the Papists took to establish themselves, and destroy the Nonconforming Phanaticks of the day, even to the rendring that Interest an Abomination, Stink, and Loathing to this day? And are others like to fare better, walking in their steps? But would it not be a better way to appoint some learned sober men to deal with these men of Conscience in a conscientious way, and speedily apply to answer those learned unanswered Treatises about Indulgence and Liberty of Conscience; that so by sound Doctrine, and the force of Reason, they may stop the mouths of gain-sayers, and reduce them to obedience; as the more hopeful way to effect it, rather than by Fines and Imprisonments?

Qu. V.

Whether it had not been more prudential, and better becoming the Wisdom and Gravity of the State, and the true Ordinance of Magistracy, that bears not the Sword in vain, to have made some vigorous Act to have inforc'd that first wholsome Proclamation to suppress Health-Drinking, swinish Drunkenness, prophane Swearing, and abominable Whoredoms, that so fearfully abound, and are wink'd at, tolerated, and encouraged in the Land; and to suppress Stage-Plays, those Nurseries of all manner of Vice and Wickedness, so numberless, and to which there are such great assembling and flocking of all sorts? *A good Ruler scatters wickedness with his Eyes*, Prov.20.8,26. Draws the Sword against the evil, not the well-doer, *Rom.*13.4,5. And whether a due enquiry into the illegal † Pluralities, Non-Residents, and Simonists, the sordid Ignorance, Pride, Sloth, Debauchery and Covetousness of the Clergy, (as one great ground why their Publick Assemblies are so quitted, and the Conventicles so numerously frequented) which foresaid Crimes in the Clergy, the Overseers of the Church (the Bishops) so wink at, and tolerate; might not have been a more successful Remedy?

† *Vide* Ichabod's *Complaint*; *a son of the Church*.

Qu. VI.

Whether for a Parent that hath Children of different Judgments, yet (by his fatherly Eye) keeps peace in the Family; for him to joyn with the most ambitious and malicious, to force and club the rest of them into a Unity and Conformity, to the disturbing the quiet of the Family, and the hazarding his own perpetual peace and comfort, can be without great imprudence, if not *Solomon's* just censure? *Prov.*14.1. & 11.29.

Qu. VII

Qu. VII.

Whether there can be greater imprudence than to slight or disregard the Voice of Gods Judgments, by persisting in ways that have met with often and eminent Rebukes from him? And whether it is not an undeniable great Truth, That upon all the great Persecutions that have of late years been stirred up in these Nations, they have not been met with either by War, Plague, Fire, Invasion, Insurrection, Poverty, or Discontent? And whether upon relaxing the same by Indulgence, greater Peace, Quiet, and Blessing hath not visibly attended? And *was there ever any that hardned themselves against God, and prospered? Job* 9. 4. *Prov.*29.1. *Isa.*46.10. And whether it is not for our better instruction, that those Nations are most prosperous, and under greatest Blessings, that give Liberty of Conscience; and those Kingdoms most declining, that abound in Persecution? Witness that of *Spain*, now so low, that they can neither defend themselves, nor succour their Allies.

Qu. VIII.

Whether it is not expresly against the Kings printed Declarations and Promises for Indulgence, as well as his private frequent Conferences; wherein he hath so freely and fully expressed how much it is agreeable to his Conscience, Reason, and Resolution, to indulge Tender Consciences; as most conducing to the peace and quiet of these Nations, and suitable to the Rules of Honesty and Prudence? And therefore whether it must not be rationally concluded, That He is as well imposed upon hereby, and his Honour impaired, as the Laws broken, and the Peoples Ruine threatned?

Fifthly, As for advancing some private corrupt Interest hereby.

Qu. I.

Whether it is not manifest that this Law was meerly contrived and brought forth to serve some private corrupt Interest, and not for publick good and advantage?

1. Because it is in it self so opposite to the Laws of God and Man, as well as to the Publick Promises and Declarations.

2. By its undue forming and bringing forth, carried on by such a heady violent Faction, by strength of Vote, against all the force of Unanswered Reason, given them both within doors, and without; the Votes of the House (as observed therein) going one way, and the Reason of the House another: Highly bespeaking influence and design.

3. Because it intrusts none but those that are esteemed the vilest persons

persons in the Nation (*viz.* the Informers) to manage it; all persons being at their mercy.

4. From the undue Methods to inforce it: Whereas good Laws need no other incitation to their execution, but their own moral Equity and Righteousness; But this, contrary to all other Mediums, (knowing how much it would be against the hair, grain, and interest of the Nation) doth hire, fright and force all sorts to its execution.

5. From the mischievousness of it, being calculated directly to set all at variance, and every mans hand against his Neighbour, Friend, and Relation.

Qu. II.

Whether it is not obvious to every eye, that this monstrous Act was not eminently contrived, driven on, and spirited by the Bishops and their corrupt interest?

1. Because of their former old Rage, Envy, and Malice, testified herein; who will *neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that would to enter in*; like their Fathers of old, *Mat.* 23.13.

2. Because it is no other than the practical improvement of the mischievous Doctrine they have so plentifully given us by their prophane atheistical Chaplains, *Parker* and his fellows.

3. From their indefatigable industry (all other Laws and means failing to accomplish their mischievous purposes) by hook or crook firmly to engage a Party in the House to their Devotion herein: Witness (as said) the 300 Letters in the Interval to the Members, the high Caresses and Treats to the Blades, and the large Bribes to the Gentlemen of the long Robe, their violent and passionate Concern in their own persons; though (as must be owned) with the worthy dissent of some of Themselves in the House.

4. From their unwearied Activities to promote the violent prosecution thereof, both in City and Country: Witness that late inciting and provoking Sermon upon this occasion, by one of Themselves, from *Ezra* 7.26. *And whosoever will not do the Law of God, and the Law of the King, let judgement be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.*: Excellently urged and applied, as they use to apply Texts! This being a Law of the King agreeable to the Word and Law of God, for the good of his People, and building of his House; And theirs a Law of the King in express contradiction to the Law of God, (as before) to the destruction of his House, and ruine of his People.

Qu. III.

Qu. III.

Whether if so, the Prelatical Interest has not throughly discovered it self to the Nation and all men, That thus meerly to satisfie and maintain their Lust, Sloth, Avarice, Pomp and Pride, can be content at once (with their Fathers †, nay worse) to sacrifice the Laws of God, Nature and Nations, and hazard the publick Peace and Safety? And whether it may not comfortably be hoped their folly is hereby so plainly made manifest, that they shall be able to proceed no further? As 2 Tim. 3. 8, 9. Job 5. 12, 13. Psal. 9. 16.

† Who began the former Wars, called Bellum Episcopale.

Qu. IV.

Whether to put all out of doubt, it might not conduce much to the Honour of the King, Safety, Satisfaction, and Security of the People, and the Justice of the Law, That such evil Counsellors, whether in Parliament or Council, should be discovered, (as the late Chancellour was, for his trayterous mischievous Advice in Council, against the fundamental Laws of the Land, and Safety of the People) that should thus dare, against the Laws of God, Nature, and Nations, so much against the Kings Honour, the Interest, Peace, Safety, and Good of the People, so contrary to all Rules of Prudence, Policy, and Ingenuity, so much conducing to introduce Popery and all Confusion; That they may be esteemed the *Empson's* and *Dudley's* of the Day, the Incendiaries and Fire-brands of the Age: And that all those good Patriots that have witnessed and entred their Protests against this cursed Law, might be also known, and respected accordingly.

Qu. V.

Whether the malicious Persecutors, persisting in their Rage and Madness, may expect to fare better than their Brother Persecutors of old, in the like spirit, have done? *Exod.* 15. 9, 10. *Est.* 7. 9, 10. *Dan.* 6. 24. To the fulfilling *Psal.* 7. 14, 15, 16. *Rev.* 18. 6, 7, 8. *Isa.* 10. 24, 25.

Qu. VI.

Whether (in due consideration hereof) any but men of debauched Principles, Consciences, and Lives, void of the fear of God and his Laws, and reverence to men and theirs, and wholly regardless of either Bodies, Souls, Estates, and Posterities for future, will venture to do this drudgery for the Bishops, (or Devil rather) in betraying and so violently and injuriously oppressing their Neighbours; nay, so foolhardy to be thereby engaging against God and Christ himself, so much concerned herein? As *Psal.* 83. 5. *Act.* 9. 5. *Mat.* 25. 45.

Qu. VII.

Whether the good People of the Nation ought not (having the Com-

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mand and Authority of the King of Kings) to go on in their expreſs Duty, in keeping up his Commands in their reſpective Meetings and Aſſemblings to Worſhip him, though ſo expreſly againſt the Law and Command of the King, as they did, *Dan.*3. 16,17,18. & 6. 10. *Acts* 4.17,18,19,20. & 5.28,29. And in caſe any ſuffer upon this account, whether they can ſuffer in a better Cauſe, than thus to aſſert the Intereſt, Word, and Ways of Chriſt, their juſt Liberties, both Natural, Civil, and Chriſtian, againſt ſuch violent and unreaſonable oppoſition of all? And whether Chriſt is not able and faithful to make up, reward, and recompence any hazard, loſs, or ſhame that may ſo redound upon his account, and his Goſpel? *Mat.* 19. 29. *Heb.* 10. 34. & 11.25,26. *Rev.* 2. 10.

Qu. VIII.

Whether it doth not concern the whole Phanatick Party, in conſideration of all this unnatural and unreaſonable Rage and Severity, to lay it to heart, and conſider, That however they may be perſecuted from men for their vertue, they having no evil thing juſtly to lay to their charge, as *Pſal.*35.19,20. & 59.3. & 69.4. *John* 10.32. though put into Bears Skins, and great matters alledged againſt them, as *Ezra* 4.15. *Eſt.*3.8. *Mat.*10.25. *Act.*17.6,7,8. yet as coming from God, which is to be eyed, *Job* 5.6. *Iſa.*42.24. and as not being without cauſe, *Ezek.*14.23. Therefore to be humbled under his mighty hand, 1 *Pet.*5.6. to ſearch out the provocation, *Lam.*3.40,41. *Joſh.*7.12,13. Stone the *Achan*, *Joſh.*7.25. Crying mightily to the Lord, as *Iſrael* did under the like affliction, *Exod.*2.23. And it may be God may ſee the Affliction, and hear the Cry, and Deliver: As *Exod.*3.7,8. *Joel* 2.12,13,14.

IX.

Whether it doth not manifeſtly appear, that this unnatural ſeverity tends either to deter from known duty (in attending the Worſhip of God according to his Word) Or from the Extremity, to provoke to Sedition, Tumult or Rebellion; neceſſitating thereby a falling either into the hands of God or Man: Therefore whether all concerned therein are not obliged to put forth utmoſt diligence and circumſpection, as to anſwer a good Conſcience in cleaving unto the Lord and his Laws, giving a Teſtimony to this evil Generation that they are *Purſe* as well as *Priſon proof*, having better learned & received Chriſt than to ſell or part with him upon ſuch mean tearms: So on the other hand, to be keeping on in that meekneſs and patience of Chriſt that they have been led and proſpered in, as the approved promiſed way of overcoming, *Rev* 3.10. & 12.11. Whereby may they not ſtill comfortably expect, in ſpite of Hell and the gates thereof, the Goſpel's progreſs, in ſinners converſion and Saints confirmation, the eſtabliſhment of *Chriſt's*, and downfal of *Antichriſts* Kingdom, (and thereby the cutting off occaſion from them that ſeek it, to the ſhame and confuſion of their faces) and their own everlaſting peace and comfort?

FINIS.